

Fixing our Eyes on Jesus: Asian Churches Pressing On



The joyous celebration of the ATA Triennial General Assembly at the Chongshin University and Theological Seminary, Republic of Korea on July 25-29, 2016 marked another milestone in the history of ATA. The five-day gathering was successfully spent in rich dialogue and deep reflection on the role of theological education in equipping leaders for the mission of the Church in Asia and beyond.

Around 250 delegates from 25 countries participated in this momentous event focusing on the theme "Fixing our Eyes on Jesus." The devotional speakers namely Sang-beop Shim, Andreas Himawan, Luke Cheung, and Imad Shehadeh began each day with their inspiring messages that encouraged every listener to continue on serving God despite our changing and challenging society.

Five plenary papers were pre-

sented highlighting God's abundant grace in Asia; history of Christianity in Asia; growth of missions in Asia and the role of Asia in global missions; key issues and challenges confronting the churches in Asia; and the response of theological education to global and local (glocal) challenges.

The theologians and church leaders of more than 100 member institutions attended this gathering including friends/partners who

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Bishop Efraim Tendaro & Bal Sharma
(God's Abundant Grace in Asia)



Makito Masaki & Lauren Kim
(Christianity in Asia: Historical Perspective)



Paul Cornelius & In-Sub Ahn
(Christianity in Asia: Missions Perspective)



Clive Chin & Shekhar Singh
(Challenges in Asia)



Dieumeme Noelliste & Binsen Samuel Sidjabat
(TE: Responding to Global and Local Challenges)

showed their continuous support to ATA's various ministries. Among them were Bishop Efraim Tendaro of World Evangelical Alliance, Pieter Kwant of Langham Partnership, Stuart Brooking of Overseas Council Australia, Kevin Lawson of Biola University, Clark Campbell of Rosemead School of Psychology, Billie Hanks of Operation Multiplication, and Sadiri Joy Tira of Lausanne Movement Catalysts for Diasporas.

In the Business Meeting held on June 27, Dr. Jung-Sook Lee, ATA Executive

Board Secretary, explained carefully the revisions made in the ATA Constitution. After some significant clarifications, the members unanimously approved the revised Constitution. Also, the new officers and leaders (see page 5) and the financial report including the annual budget were accepted and approved by the voting members present in this meeting.

On the night of July 28, Dr. Theresa Roco Lua was installed as the new General Secretary. Bishop Ef Tendaro,



Rev. Youngwood Kim, President, Chongshin University and Theological Seminary, delivering his Welcome Address at the Opening Night



Secretary General/CEO of the World Evangelical Alliance, officiated the installation service. Chongshin welcomed Dr. Lua with a bouquet of beautiful flowers while some beloved friends sent her words of encouragement. The entire ATA community rejoiced with her as she delivered her heartfelt response giving all glory to God as she continues to serve Him in her new post.

Prior to the installation, Dr. Bong Rin Ro, ATA Executive Secretary (1970-1990) narrated the development and growth of ATA from its inception in 1970 to its present stage.

Coinciding the installation night was the cultural presentations of the delegates showcasing the local culture in their country or region. Everyone enjoyed singing, dancing, and fellowshiping with one another. It was a night of fun and excitement.



The new General Secretary with her husband, Dr. Fernando Lua & their two sons, Timothy & Joshua



Dr. Theresa Lua with former General Secretaries, Drs. Bong Ro and Joseph Shao



Dr. Richard Hart was honored with plaque of appreciation for his faithful service to ATA as member of Commission on Accreditation and Educational Development (CAED) for 21 years.



Dr. Joseph Shao was awarded plaque of appreciation in grateful recognition of his faithful service as General Secretary for nine years.



Philippines



The GA participants with some wearing their cultural attires



India and Pakistan



Indonesia



Japan



Israel



Malaysia



Korea

Two afternoons of this assembly were organized for 13 interest groups that dealt with challenging issues and concerns in theological education. Apart from these, 9 papers in celebration of the 500 Years of Reformation in Asia were discussed. It was a time of learning, equipping, and networking between leaders, partners, and friends of ATA.

A panel discussion was held on the last day facilitated by Dr. Theresa Lua. ATA was honored to have Dr. Ashish Chrispal, Overseas Council's Regional Director for Asia, as one of the panelist. Together with him in the panel discussion were Ms. Otgontuya Bold (Mongolia), Dr. Rosalind Yeet-Wah Lim (Malaysia), and Dr. Steve Chang (Korea). The panelists shared their reflections as well as their recommendations on the priorities of ATA in serving the ever-growing churches in Asia.

The General Assembly concluded in a Communion Service led by Dr. Cheonseol Han, Chaplain of Chongshin University. Everyone was dismissed with a blessing of commitment to fix their eyes more on Jesus as they continue to journey on God's direction in fulfilling their missions in training leaders for the church in Asia and beyond.

ATA is grateful to all faculty, staff, and students of Chongshin University and Theological Seminary for graciously hosting the ATA 2016 Triennial General Assembly. We specially thank Rev. Youngwood Kim for welcoming us warmly and for his commitment to build lasting friendship and partnership between Chongshin and ATA. ■



Interest Groups



Panel Discussion



Communion Service

ATA Executive Board Meets in Korea



Prior to the opening of General Assembly, the ATA Board gathered on July 25 for mutual encouragement, sharing of reports, board appointments, constitution review, and briefing on the GA plans and preparations. Dr. Joseph Shao shared briefly about the significance of ATA and its role in theological education in the region. He recognized the work and contributions of the former General Secretaries that have made ATA what it is today. Highlighted in the meeting was the increase in membership of ATA. We have now 300 institutions from 34 countries.

The following office bearers were approved by the Board and ratified by the General Assembly.

ATA Leaders and Officers

1. Chairman - Dr. Takanori Kobayashi (Japan)
President, Tokyo Christian University
2. Vice Chairman - Dr. Andreas Himawan (Indonesia)
President, Amanat Agung Theological Seminary
3. Secretary - Dr. Jung-Sook Lee (Korea)
President, Torch Trinity Graduate University
4. Treasurer - Dr. Jangmook Manoch (Thailand)
President, Bangkok Bible Seminary
5. Dr. Clement Chia (Singapore)
President, Singapore Bible College
6. Dr. Luke Cheung (Hong Kong)
Vice President, China Graduate School of Theology
7. Dr. Lee-Shen Tsai (Taiwan)
President, China Evangelical Seminary
8. Dr. Shekhar Singh (Chairman, ATA India)
President, Union Biblical Seminary
9. Dr. Young Ook Kim (Chairman, ATA Korea)
President, Asian Center for Theological Studies and Missions
10. Dr. Andrew Spurgeon (Chairman, Publications Committee)
NT Professor, East Asia School of Theology, Singapore
11. Prof. Ronnie Poon (Chairman, Commission on Accreditation and Educational Development)

- Academic Dean, Alliance Bible Seminary, Hong Kong
12. Dr. Makito Masaki (Presiding Dean, AGST Council) President, Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary, Japan
 13. Dr. Theresa Lua (Philippines) General Secretary, ATA

Commission on Accreditation and Educational Development

- Prof. Ronnie Poon (Chairman)
Dr. Theresa Lua (General Secretary)
Dr. Paul Cornelius (Regional Secretary, India)
Dr. Ng Peh Cheng (Associate Secretary)
Dr. Teresa Chai (Associate Secretary)
Dr. Graham Aylett

- Dr. Chiu Eng Tan
Dr. Rahmiati Tanudjaja
Dr. Hung-Ho Chong
Dr. Jin Sup Kim
Dr. Rick Weymouth
Dr. Samuel Sidjabat

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Dr. Steve Pardue
Dr. George Harper
Dr. Anne Harper
Dr. Finny Philip
Ms. Bubbles Lactaen
Dr. Theresa Lua (Ex-officio)

AGST Council

- Dr. Makito Masaki (Presiding Dean)
Dr. Bong Rin Ro (Dean, AGST Pacific)
Dr. Azriel Azarcon (Dean, AGST Philippines)
Dr. Sooi Ling Tan (Dean, AGST Alliance)
Dr. Paul Cornelius
Dr. Luke Cheung
Dr. Theresa Lua (Ex-officio)

The new fee structure below was approved at the Executive Board and endorsed at the ATA Triennial General Assembly in the Republic of Korea.

ASIA THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL FEES CHARGED 2016 (IN USD)

	GROUP A 2016	GROUP B 2016	GROUP C 2016
Application Fee-W/in Asia	400	300	100
Application Fee-Outside Asia	500	400	
Associate Member Annual Fee			
Association/Organization	420	420	420
Institutions	350	350	350
Accredited Member Annual Fee:			
Undergraduate	750	580	350
Graduate	850	650	420
Post Graduate	900	750	500
Doctoral Level	950	820	580
VET Fee:			
Undergraduate	750	550	350 up to 2 programs
Additional / Program	90	70	40 each program
Graduate	800	650	400 up to 2 programs
Additional / Program	100	80	60 each program
Post Graduate	850	700	500 up to 2 programs
Additional / Program	125	100	80 each program
Doctoral Level	950	800	550 up to 2 programs
Additional / Program	150	120	100 each program

* US \$

Group A:

Within Asia- Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Japan, Macau, Singapore, Taiwan
Outside Asia- USA/ Europe, Israel, Australia

Group B:

Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Jordan, Vietnam

Group C:

Bangladesh, India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka



We thank the Lord for the four new Asia Bible Commentaries: Psalms 1-72 and Lamentations by Federico Villanueva, Judges by Athena Gorospe with Charles Ringma, and 1, 2, 3 John by Gilbert Soo Hoo with Pervaiz

Sultan. This is the first set of ABC commentaries published under the partnership between ATA and Langham International, and it comes with a new look! The book launching was held on July 26 at the ATA 2016 General Assembly in



Book signing of the newly-launched ABC commentaries

Republic of Korea. There were also re-launching on August 30 during the ATA India Annual Meetings in Bangalore and on September 22 at the Singapore Bible College. ■

My Experience Writing the Commentary on Judges

By Athena Gorospe, Associate Professor, Asia Theological Seminary, Manila, Philippines



"I think what drew me first to the book were the many stories about women. They range from those who were passive, exploited, and forcibly violated to those who were active agents, who initiated and were empowered to take on cultural and religious roles that were traditionally assigned to men. Apart from the stories of women, there are other puzzles in the book that intrigued me. First, what do we make of Jephthah's vow and the sacrifice of his daughter in Judges 11? Is the point of the story that we should fulfill our vows no matter what it costs—even to the point of sacrificing a loved one? And how about the Samson, whose lust for women and self-centered way of life were contrary to God's commands, and yet he was used by God to do damage to the Philistines? Then there is the story of the Levite and his concubine—the first chop-chop lady. I heard an exposition once that the woman deserved to be gang raped because she was unfaithful to her husband, which seemed to me horrendous. So I felt it was important that I devote time to understand the stories

and accept the challenge of how they can be appropriated ethically for today.

Beyond the individual stories, however, is the story of a people who have lost God at the heart. Yes, Israel—God's chosen people—continue to engage in God-talk; yes, they maintain an outward form of piety, but increasingly they marginalize God. Thus, other things—the idols of their own making—become central while God is pushed to the peripheries. The result is a utilitarian way of life in which one uses God and uses people and the main values is what works—what is practical and pragmatic—rather than what is pleasing to God.

Dr. Charles Ringma and I began this commentary in 2006 so it has been a long journey. Due to other heavy responsibilities, we could only work on the commentary for one to two months every summer break. We were 1/3 through the book when grave illnesses struck. Charles was stricken with cancer with only 17% chances to live. I, on the other hand, struggled with chronic and sometimes life-threatening allergies so that I was in a heavy dose of steroids and antihistamines for nearly a year. The book languished for 5 years.

In 2012, we began again but Charles, having recovered from cancer, already had to finish other back writing projects. Thus, so much of the writing was left to me, while Charles concentrated on writing small

reflections which I integrated into my own work. We resolved from the very beginning that we will seek for a unified text rather than have one text for the exegesis and another one for the thematic exposition. I hope that we succeeded. We praise God that finally it has seen the light of day. We have grown much through the writing of it and our reflections on the stories deepened our walk with God and helped shape how we live our lives.

We hope and pray that this book will be a gift to the global church and that it will be used by the Spirit to help us grow in grace, in wisdom and discernment, and in the true knowledge of God." ■

Asia Bible Commentary Series Forthcoming

Genesis Augustine Pagolu	Leviticus Ming Him Ko	Micah Johan Ferreira with Ruth House
Ezra & Nehemiah Joseph Tso Shao with Rosa Ching Shao	Ecclesiastes Sereé Lorgjunpai with Varunaj Churnai	
Matthew Samson L. Uyartlet with Kua Clem Kook	Luke Kazuhiro Yamasaki-Ransom	

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